From whence come Wars?

An Enquiry into the Origin, with a View of the Progreſs and Effects, of War.

A

SERMON,

PREACHED IN THE

CHURCH OF GOVAN,

ON THE

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BY THE REVEREND

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AN ENQUIRY INTO THE ORIGIN,

WITH A VIEW OF THE

PROGRESS AND EFFECT

OF WAR.

JAMES IV. 1, 2, 3.

From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your luſts that war in your members? Ye luſt, and have not: ye kill, and deſire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, becauſe ye aſk not. Ye aſk, and receive not, becauſe ye aſk amiſs, that ye may conſume it upon your luſts.

WAR is ſo hideous and deteſtable, that when any ſerious perſon ſees, or hears of its exiſtence and its operations, he finds it natural to enquire into its origin, and to put to himſelf, and to the contending parties, if he hath acceſs to them, ſuch a queſtion as you have in the text, From whence come wars?—From whence come wars and fightings among you? and, upon a ſlight enquiry, he is ſatisfied, that ſo foul and ruinous a thing muſt be derived from ſome very polluted ſource: *Come they not*,—come not wars hence, even from your luſts that war in your members.

There are ſeveral ſorts of contention, each of which may be called a war.—If a man is vicious, or but half virtuous, there is often a war within his boſom; his appetites and unruly deſires ſtrive againſt his reaſon. If one who hath not yet learned virtue, will, in an hour of thoughtfulneſs, look to what is a tranſacting within him, he may perceive tumult, fighting, confuſion; one inſatiable luſt is ſometimes engaged againſt another; his avarice, for inſtance, againſt his pride; at times each of them fights againſt conſcience, that deputy of God in the ſoul, and too often with a fatal ſucceſs: he may be ſenſible of their keenneſs, their onſet, and the victory they obtain on that interior field; he may even feel the wounds they have given, and obſerve the ſcars that remain. *Fleſhly luſts war againſt the ſoul.*

In private life, after ſociety hath taken place, when the more powerful ſeizes on the property, aſſaults the perſon, or invades the life of his weaker neighbour, then there is a broil, a contention, a private war in the neighbourhood; and then a foundation is laid for an action at law: this too is a ſort of war, and like other wars, it exhauſts, it gives pain, and the iſſue of it is uncertain. The poor injured perſon feels great pain, whilſt he is in anxiety about a deciſion, on which perhaps his very ſubſiſtence doth depend. And be he ever ſo grievouſly and palpably injured, he cannot be ſure of meeting with redreſs, eſpecially if he is very poor, or in very low life. Society is corrupted, and courts

of juſtice are corrupted in proportion. The weak is borne down and diſappointed, or, if in the iſſue he gains his cauſe, yet by the great expence, and protracting of the cauſe, perhaps for many years, he would not have been half ſo great a loſer had he never moved for any redreſs at all.

Great and wonderful is the influence of the opulent upon their neighbours in common life; as great is their influence upon the judges in our law-courts. Let me therefore, by the way, hint at an important advice, and I ſincerely wiſh that there may be few, or none of you, who ſhall ever have any need of it—Thou haſt been injured—thy friends are ſenſible that the injury is glaring and deep—thou art provoked—thy ſpirits are high—thy hopes are ſanguine—thou thinkeſt it a ſure point that thou will eaſily obtain legal redreſs—fallacious hope! Alas! thou art too poor to bear the expence of a proceſs at law; thou art too little known; thou haſt no member of the court to puſh forward thy cauſe. If thou contendeſt with ſome great perſon, thou mayſt lay thy account before hand that reſpect will be ſhewn to the man with the gold-ring and the gay clothing, the man who hath riches, who hath liberality of ſoul to furniſh out a copious and ſplendid entertainment to the judges; believe me, and for once follow my advice—adventure not on a proceſs which will certainly be expenſive, which, in all probability, will be tedious, and however clear thou mayeſt think it, its iſſue is extremely doubtful, thou will be borne

down and diſappointed:—or, ſuppoſe that by ſome odd and favourable chance thou ſhouldſt ſucceed, yet it is fifty to one, that, upon the whole, thou will be a loſer. Check that luſt which ſtimulates thee to take the field in this ſort of war. Leave off the contention before it be meddled with.—Agree with thine adverſary by the way, rather than embark in a contention that will be expenſive and tedious, and the iſſue of it precarious. Sooth thine adverſary, accept of his terms, or ſubmit the difference to the firſt ſtranger thou meeteſt with; if he be a man of ſenſe and common honeſty, the leſs knowledge he hath of our law, his deciſion will probably be the more conſiſtent with material juſtice. A proceſs at law, in moſt of our courts, is like trying one's fortune at a ſtate-lottery. A wiſe man who hath made one trial, will hardly ever venture to make a ſecond.

I preſume the text would juſtify me though, in this diſcourſe, I ſhould confine myſelf to that interior war, that torture which an unrenewed man feels, which even when his luſts are kept from burſting out in flagrant acts of intemperance, injuſtice, or violence, yet they burn within him as red coals covered up with aſhes: or, ſhould I ſpeak only of that other war, going to law, which I have juſt now mentioned. But there is another dreadful contention, which is more properly, and alſo more commonly, called war, namely, public ſolemn war, that is, either when two independent ſtates arm themſelves for mutual deſtruction; or civil war, that is,

when two different parts of the ſame empire are unfortunately at variance, and go to war with each other: It is in reference to one or other, or both of theſe laſt-mentioned wars, that I deſign this diſcourſe: and this, I think, is to act with propriety on a day when we are aſſembled, by lawful authority, to confeſs our ſins, to implore the pardon of them; and to pray that God would give ſucceſs in that war wherein we have already been long engaged; and preſerve us againſt the violent hoſtilities of France, and the unprovoked attacks of that ſtrong and perfidious power.

From the text, it is manifeſt, that there were wars among thoſe to whom St. James addreſſes this epiſtle; and of theſe wars their luſts were indiſputably the cauſe. That there are wars among Chriſtians now, is a mournful fact, of which we need not take long time to inveſtigate the cauſe: Luſts produced wars formerly, and the ſame, or ſimilar effects, do now alſo ſpring from the ſame or from ſimilar cauſes: *From whence come wars and fighting among you? come they not hence, even from your luſts that war in your members?*

In this diſcourſe I intend to do the following things.

I. I will mention ſome of theſe luſts from which wars and fightings take their riſe.

II. I will next ſhew a little more particularly, why it is that luſt, or the gratification of luſt, is the origin and cauſe of war.

III. I will take ſome notice of the miſery of thoſe nations that are engaged in war.

IV. I will next ſhew, which ſeems to be intimated in the text, that it is ſtrange that Chriſtians, who have ſo much reaſon to live in peace, ſhould wage war againſt each other.

V. I will then mention ſome rules and limitations, which have been agreed upon to mitigate the ills of war.—And in the laſt place,

VI. I will mention, and moſtly from the text, a few reaſons, why a people who have ſome religion, or at leaſt appear to be ſerious, may continue long involved in diſtreſs, and even in the calamities of war itſelf.

I intend to ſpeak plainly, and to be ſhort on each of theſe particulars, which, as I apprehend, are all founded in the text.

I. I will mention ſome of theſe luſts from which wars and fightings take their riſe.—And the firſt I mention is, the luſt of carnal pleaſure. This, if I miſtake not, is ſtrictly and properly called luſt in the ſtile of ſcripture, and in common converſation. This particular luſt is as dangerous as it is impetuous, if it be not reſtrained and directed by reaſon, and by laws human and divine. And it appears evidently, from ſcripture, from the moſt ancient hiſtory, and even from fable, that this luſt hath been the unhappy cauſe of bloodſhed, of maſſacres, and of tedious wars.—Another luſt I mention, which hath been the cauſe of wars, is the violent deſire of being rich. This luſt, as it occaſions broils and contentions in private life, ſo, in like man-

ner, it kindles up the flames of war among the princes of this world. Many of them think, and ſome of them have been heard to ſay, "Why ſhould ſuch a prince enjoy a greater revenue than I have? the territories from which he draws the moſt of it lies contiguous to my dominions; a part of it belonged to one of my predeceſſors. The foreign commerce which he appropriates to his ſubjects, and which enables them to pay him ſuch immenſe cuſtoms and taxes, ought, in natural juſtice, to be laid open to my ſubjects alſo. Let us arm, and do ourſelves juſtice by a juſt and neceſſary war." Nay, it hath happened in our own times, that three princes in Europe, did, from avarice, agree to ſeize upon a great part of a neighbouring kingdom, which, by the efforts or the terror of their armies, they divided among themſelves. A third luſt, from which wars ariſe, is ambition or pride. This luſt is, I believe, in the eſtimation of the world, accounted leſs mean and contemptible than the baſe purſuit of riches, or the wild deſire of ſenſual pleaſure, but it is certainly as pernicious. If we attentively examine the hiſtory of paſt times, we will ſee that princes have often raiſed war from the luſt of worldly glory, from an unbridled deſire to enlarge their dominions, and to ſee the neighbouring kings brought into ſubjection, and bowing down before them: or, from a luſt of glory as criminal, namely, to enſlave their own ſubjects, ſo that they ſhall not dare to think of reſiſting their arbitrary will, or even to mutter or complain

of the grievous oppreſſion which they ſuffer. Theſe luſts, which I have ſo briefly mentioned, are the ſame which St. John enumerates, after adviſing us not to love the world. 'Love not, he 'ſays, the world, neither the things that are in 'the world; for all that is in the world, the luſt 'of the fleſh, and the luſt of the eyes and the pride 'of life, which is not of the Father, but is of the 'world.'* Luſt, in general, is the cauſe of war. To ſome one or other of the diſorderly appetites I have named, the riſe of every war may be traced. I will however mention, as a particular cauſe of war, the paſſion of revenge, which is, you know, the child of pride. This luſt, I doubt not, hath ſometimes been the cauſe of wars and fightings. A nation, from its ill ſucceſs in war, or from dread of being ſwallowed up, or overwhelmed by ſome formidable neighbour, hath been perhaps forced to ſubmit to terms which it thinks unreaſonable and unjuſt. It keeps itſelf quiet for perhaps a long time. Like a bull in the foreſt, it collects all its ſtrength, and from this thirſt of revenge, renews the war, with a view to wipe off the affront it had received, and regain the advantage it had loſt.—I may add that ſometimes wicked miniſters of ſtate engage their maſter in a war merely to ſcreen themſelves from condign puniſhment; to divert or ſtifle the clamour of an injured people againſt their covetous and bungling adminiſtration, they wilfully involve the nation in all the miſeries of war: this, this alas!

* 1 John ii. 15, 16.

hath often been done. I might perhaps mention many other particular cauſes from which wars and fightings come; ſome of them too ſhameful to be named: but every war is derived, as I have ſaid, from ſome of the general ſources already ſpoken of. *From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even from your luſts that war in your members?*—Come they not from your criminal luſt after ſenſual pleaſure,—or from a greedy deſire of riches, of poſſeſſing yourſelves of that which is the property of your neighbour? or from an ambitious deſire to appear in ſplendor, to be admired for the extent and value of your poſſeſſions, to have great power, and to ſee thoſe who are now your equals reduced to the neceſſity of bowing and cringing before you?—Or do not wars and fightings among you ariſe from a reſtleſs implacable temper? from a ſpirit of revenge? from an abiding reſentment of ſome perhaps real, perhaps very ſlight or imaginary affront, or injury, which you fancy you have ſuſtained?—or from the artifices of ſome mean-ſpirited and covetous miniſter, who, when the cry of an impoveriſhed and abuſed people grows loud againſt him, for his blundering and inglorious adminiſtration, adds to all his other crimes, that of involving the nation in laſting miſery, that he may keep his lucrative place, and ſtave off, for a while, that diſgrace and puniſhment which he richly deſerves.—I will next ſhew a little more particularly,

II. How, and why it is that luſts, or the gra-

tification of luſts, is the origin and cauſe of war. And this is the caſe, becauſe it commonly happens, that, by the illicit gratification of luſts, ſome of the ſacred rights of mankind are violated: then the injured perſon acquires a right to compel the injurious to make him reparation. When the injurer refuſes to do this, and by force maintains and defends the injuſtice he hath done, and the injured alſo ſtrives with all his might that juſtice may be done him, then it is manifeſt that wars and fightings muſt ariſe: this is the caſe between the individuals of mankind in a ſtate of natural liberty, and between kingdoms after political ſociety hath been conſtituted.

There are indeed certain claims, called imperfect rights, which, though they be violated, yet the injured party cannot, by any law, compel the fulfilment of them by force. If I, from compaſſion, aſſiſt a poor man, even by conſiderable ſums of money, to emerge out of his diſtreſſed condition into opulence and eaſe, I have no right to force him to reſtore to me what I had freely and voluntarily beſtowed to relieve him: let him afterwards become fifty times richer than ever I was, and let me be reduced to ever ſo poor circumſtances; I have no title to make any ſuch demand upon him; no title to commence any action at law upon that head: it is indeed highly fit and equitable that ſuch reſtitution ſhould be made: and it is manifeſt that in aſſiſting and relieving the miſerable conſiſts the nobleſt exerciſe of virtue: and in making chearful and proper returns for ſuch beneficence conſiſts the vir-

tue of gratitude: the man who violates theſe imperfect rights is himſelf a very bad man: he is relieved by the generoſity of others, but he hath not the heart to make any return; his example tends to harden the heart of the opulent, and cauſe them ſhut their ears againſt the cries of the miſerable. God and conſcience require that ſuitable returns ſhould be made for good offices that have been done; — but theſe returns cannot be forced; and if they ſhould be forced, they would ceaſe to be virtue.

But it is quite otherwiſe with reſpect to the rights which are called perfect; the right which a man hath to his property, to his life, to defend the life of a parent, to protect his innocent family, to defend the honour of a ſiſter, of a daughter, or a wife. Whenſoever any one offers to injure him in any of theſe particulars, he hath right to repel the injury by force; and if the injury be already done, he hath right to compel the injurious party to make compleat reparation, or to make him ſuffer a condign puniſhment for his crime.

All that I have ſaid concerning the behaviour of individuals to one another, is equally true when applied to kingdoms: if a kingdom, or the ſovereign of a kingdom, ſees a neighbouring kingdom, or an infant-ſtate, in danger of being unjuſtly cruſhed and overwhelmed by a formidable power, and generouſly, and even at great expence, interpoſeth to defend and protect that weak or infant-ſtate; and by his noble efforts not only defends it, but in fact exalts it to opu-

lence and grandeur, he doth not, however, acquire any right to demand or exact by force any return, any pay, or tax for this voluntary kindneſs.

But when any king or ſtate ſeizes on the property of another ſtate, the injured, as I have ſaid, have an undiſputed right to demand reparation, and to effectuate it by open force: without this right, and the proper exerciſe of it, human ſociety could not ſubſiſt: and it is from the violation of ſome ſacred and perfect right that every juſt and lawful war doth ariſe: one would therefore be inclined to think, that only one of the parties at war can be juſtly charged with being the author of the war, namely he who committed the firſt injury: he is the aggreſſor; he gratified his criminal deſires, he violated the ſacred rights of others: from whence then come the ſubſequent wars and fightings but from him; he hath firſt done wrong, and next he maintains and defends, by force, what he hath done: but quarrels would not laſt long if the wrong were only on one ſide; and in fact it often happens, that ſoon after the war begins, it becomes difficult to ſay which of the belligerent parties is the moſt injurious, and deſerves the greateſt blame: but it for ever happens, that, in the courſe and progreſs of the war, both the parties are wretched and miſerable. I will, therefore, in the next place,

III. Take ſome notice of the miſery of thoſe nations which are engaged in war. In war, miſery is the lot of the weakeſt party, and the

ſtrongeſt is commonly miſerable alſo: the weaker party, or the people whoſe country hath become the theatre of the war, are ſurely miſerable.—In their moſt fertile territories, the armies of the enemy are encamped; the officers are lodged in their beſt towns; the ſick, the aged, are dragged from their beds; the rich are driven from their houſes to make way for the eaſe of the rapacious hoſtile ſoldiers; the corn which the harmleſs induſtrous peaſant had laid up to feed his children, the clothes he had got to cover them, are greedily ſeized upon: his ſheep and cattle are driven from the paſtures, the keepers who attempted to convey them quietly to a hiding place, are called thieves, and maſſacred, and left dead upon the ſpot: one province is overrun, one city is conquered after another—the inhabitants are cooped up in narrow bounds—famine purſues them—the furious enemy overtakes them—a ſiege is formed—a battle is ſtruck—nothing is to be ſeen but ſights of woe.—'If 'I go forth into the field, then behold the ſlain 'with the ſword; if I enter into the city, then 'behold them that are ſick with famine.'*—Many thouſands are killed on each ſide—"dying groans are heard—limbs are ſeen flying in the air—there is ſmoke, noiſe, confuſion; trampling to death under the horſes feet—flight, purſuit, victory—fields ſtrewed with carcaſes, left for food to dogs, and wolves, and birds of prey, —plundering, ſtripping, raviſhing, burning, and deſtroying."—Methinks I ſee the widow

* Jeremiah xiv. 18.

running, ſtaggering on the ſlippery, bloody field, amidſt the mangled corpſes of the dead and dying, and, ſtruck with the ſight of her expiring huſband, ſhe ſtops, ſhe graſps him in her arms; a ſight, a hold, which renders her more wretched than if the pangs of death itſelf had taken hold of her: ſhe is bereaved, ſhe is left deſolate, ſhe ſees that by the loſs of the parent the children are helpleſs—this is miſery—and yet, perhaps, cruelty proceeds ſo far, that a war of diſtreſs and deſolation is purſued; houſes, villages, cities are burned to the ground—corn, large granaries of corn, if it cannot be taken away, is deſtroyed by fire—to the men no quarter is given, and even women and children are ſtarved, or barbarouſly put to death—Thus it is, that in war the weaker ſide is miſerable: and it commonly happens, that, in the courſe of the war, or, at leaſt, in the iſſue of it, the ſtronger is miſerable alſo; they are miſerable and in pain by every diſappointment, if the vigour of the other party is at times viſibly renewed; or if there be circumſtances which ſeem to make it probable that the half-vanquiſhed ſhall entirely elude the vengeance of thoſe who prematurely boaſted of victory.—And ſometimes courage and a manly fury returns into the ſouls of thoſe who were damped, who were near to deſpair, and almoſt overcome —they are emboldened, becauſe they fight in the cauſe of their country, they fight in defence of liberty—they determine that they ſhall oblige the conqueror to purchaſe victory at a coſtly rate —or, perhaps, like the Dutch, when unjuſtly

invaded by the combined fleets and armies of France and England, they reſolve to emigrate to a diſtant land—or, like thoſe on an extenſive continent, who, having failed of ſucceſs, elude the rage of the conquerors, and diſappoint their aim, by leaving their poſſeſſions, and going far backwards to form new ſettlements in the deſart, —or, in an unjuſtifiable and highly criminal deſperation, they, like the citizens of Saguntum, burn their own houſes over their heads.—And ſometimes alſo it happens, that, by a vigorous, a deſperate and ſucceſsful courage, they are able to chaſe out of the country that very army which for a long time was like to conquer them.— Thus in war the weaker ſide are miſerable, and the ſtronger are ſo alſo.—The prince, the leaders, may by luxury be hardened againſt the ſenſe of pain; but the people, the bulk of the people, are wretched. They are over-burdened with taxes, —the country is depopulated—the tillers of the land and the uſeful artificers are comprehended, are preſſed, are dragged from their neceſſary and innocent occupations, and forced to carry on the war whether they think it righteous or ſinful. The wife, the little child, runs often to the door and looks for the huſband, the parent, whom, alas! they ſhall never ſee again. Here too the ſoldiers are juſt as miſerable, as thoſe of the weaker party: their toil is as ſevere—their beds are as hard—their ſleep as precarious—and their food as coarſe and as ſcanty:—if they retain any ſenſe of humanity, they muſt be ſhocked at thoſe acts of cruelty which they are hounded out to

commit, and if they have been the inſtruments of committing them, they muſt be ſtung with remorſe. The kingdom in ſtriving to be victorious at an enormous expence, which it can ill bear, reduces itſelf to poverty and ruin,—and if at length it ſucceeds, thoſe in the upper rank, may, for a while, enjoy a brutal and inglorious eaſe, whilſt they wallow in luxury and debauchery, devouring that which, by the fortune of the war, hath fallen into their fangs; but when that is devoured, they commonly, like hungry dogs, fall to work again, and worry, and bite, and devour one another. In ſhort, if a ſtate hath been victorious, and hath conquered an extenſive territory, it is but haſtening the faſter to its own downfal: either the ſubjects, great and ſmall, will become abſolute ſlaves under a deſpotic maſter, or elſe the empire, being too extenſive, conſiſting of too many provinces, muſt crumble again into parts; parts amongſt which all the horrible injuſtice, and all the horrible ills of war, are like to be acted over again, and ſuffered anew. I will next ſhew,

IV. What ſeems to be intimated in the text, that it is ſtrange that Chriſtians, who have ſo much reaſon to live in peace, ſhould wage war againſt each other. *From whence come wars and fightings among you?* Among you who are the diſciples of Chriſt, the diſciples of the Prince of Peace.

And moſt certainly, if people in every condition of life would imbibe the ſpirit of the goſpel, there would be few or no broils and con-

tentions in private life, few or no actions at law, becauſe there would be no occaſion given for any ſuch contention. And if great men, the princes of this world, and their miniſters, learned and practiſed the doctrine of Chriſt, there would be no wars between nation and nation.

The firſt leſſon which Chriſt preſcribes to be learned in his ſchool, and learned by every one of his followers, is this, 'If any man will 'come after me, let him deny himſelf.' If this great leſſon is learned, and put in practice—if the luſts, the criminal deſires, and impetuous appetites, which I have mentioned, are mortified; no injury will be done, and of courſe, there will not be any cauſe of war: then men would 'beat their ſwords into plow-ſhares, and their 'ſpears into prunning-hooks—nation would not 'lift up the ſword againſt nation, neither would 'they learn war any more—God's people would 'dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in ſure 'dwellings, and in quiet reſting-places:' then the propheſy concerning the peaceful ſtate of things in the days of the Meſſiah would be literally fulfilled; the fierce and the mild, 'the wolf and the 'lamb would feed together, the leopard would 'lye down with the kid; the lion would eat 'ſtraw like the bullock; none of them would 'hurt nor deſtroy.'

In the holy Scriptures many ſtrong reaſons are ſuggeſted to prevail on men to repreſs every angry paſſion, to perſuade them to do juſtly, to cultivate the kind affections, and cheriſh the ſpirit of benevolence and friendſhip. All men

are formed and upheld by the ſame God; he is their common father—'he hath made of one 'blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the 'face of the earth'—they are brethren—whenſoever any one is tempted, by whatever luſt or paſſion to injure another, he ſhould think he hears the man of God crying in his ears, 'Why ſmiteſt 'thou thy fellow? Sirs, ye are brethren, why do 'ye harm one to another?'

If princes, before they commit any atrocious and ſtriking act of public injuſtice; if lawgivers, before they raſhly enact any law which ſeems to eſtabliſh dreadful ſlavery and unlimited oppreſſion, would take time to conſider what alarm, what diſcontent, what rage and fury may be excited by ſuch haſty and violent meaſures; what wars and fightings may happen in conſequence of them, what battles may be fought, what blood may be ſhed; cities razed, and flouriſhing kingdoms laid deſolate, would not a ſenſe of juſtice operate on their minds; would not compaſſion for the many thouſands or millions whom they are going to throw into unmerited diſtreſs, check them in their furious career, and ſtop them from the execution of their criminal purpoſes? Would not fear of kindling the flames of war in their own country, and of ſeeing their own innocent ſubjects in diſtreſs and miſery, produce the ſame ſalutary effect?

But, alas! princes and great men, who in their palaces live in luxury and at eaſe, are but little ſenſible of the miſery which accompanies war: nay, even thoſe in common life are not half

enough apprized of its horror.—For aſſoon as we are capable to attend to any thing, we hear, we read, of war and the barbarous arts of deſtruction—with theſe arts we become familiar by degrees—we ſeldom examine how horrible they are, becauſe what we know of them we learn at an age when the mind receives ideas implicitly, admires any thing that appears great, and alſo retains the impreſſions that are early made upon it. Hence it is, that if a perſon in low life, to gratify his avarice, way-lays and murders another, we ſhudder at ſuch cruelty; but if a ſtateſman, to gratify his pride, his ambition, or luſt of domination, forms a plan, in the executing of which, a million of innocent people ſhall by the ſword be hurried into eternity, we applaud the daring greatneſs of his ſpirit: the firſt is, with great juſtice, condemned to an infamous death, and dragged to a gibbet; the laſt, though infinitely more criminal, is gazed upon by a ſlaviſh and ſtupid people, and perhaps gets himſelf poſſeſſed of half the riches of a kingdom.

Eternal glory, of which the goſpel gives us the view and the hope—the fallacious nature of ſenſual pleaſure—the ſmall acceſſion of delight that ſprings from opulence or large poſſeſſions—the vanity of ambition or worldly glory, might, if thought upon, reſtrain Chriſtians from thoughts of injuſtice, and thereby cut off all neceſſity of private fightings, and of public wars.—Let me add, that it is very ſeldom that a prince or a kingdom gains any thing at all, either

money or territory, even by a ſucceſsful war. *They luſt and have not, they kill and deſire to have, and cannot obtain.* On either ſide, let the war be ever ſo keenly entered into, let the principal ſubjects be all aſtir, and graſping at the executive power from the ſovereign's hands; let them levy many regiments at an enormous expence; let it be ſuppoſed that the war hath coſt the lives of millions of brave men, and millions alſo of treaſure; and that in the dreary courſe of many tedious campaigns, many of the enemies being killed, and their treaſure alſo exhauſted, the war, on one ſide, is in ſo far crowned with ſucceſs. Let it be further ſuppoſed, that each of the parties hath conquered, from its oppoſite, ſome town, or ſome barren iſland, or equally barren territory; yet, in the concluſion, it commonly happens that all things are agreed to be reſtored and ſettled on the ſame footing they were when the war began. Look at the treaties of peace that have been made in Europe for above a hundred years paſt, and you will find that this, or ſomething nearly like this, is a preliminary article in the treaty, "The high belligerent or contracting parties agree, that whatever any of them has conquered from the other, in the courſe of the war, ſhall be faithfully reſtored, and that every thing ſhall remain for ever in that ſame ſtate in which it was when the war broke out." Ridiculous! Why then did the war break out at all? What is now become of the elevated hopes, the loud boaſting, and the proud expectations of thorough ſucceſs? The mountain was in travail,

was in hard labour, was uttering mighty groans, and not ſo much as one contemptible reptile is produced. Why then, after ſo many inſtances of ſucceſsleſs war, why venture to repeat the dangerous trial? This view of war is ſo evidently ridiculous, that, many years ago, I have heard ſome able and enlightened people maintain, that the time would ſoon come when the princes of Europe and their miniſters, however weak and ignorant they may be ſuppoſed to be, (and weak and ignorant, it is ſaid, many of them are, to a very amazing degree,) will ſo clearly perceive their intereſt, that they will finiſh all their differences by arbitration, or ſome other quiet means, without any longer entering into war: a ſtate of things, which, I fear, is rather to be wiſhed, than to be hoped for. Hitherto, it would ſeem that the rulers of kingdoms do often kindle up the flames of war, without knowing why, without having any ſpecial reaſon to do ſo. A long and bloody war was not long ago carried on between Great Britain and France, and, upon a retroſpective view of it, politicians and hiſtorians are, it ſeems, at a loſs to tell what was the cauſe of it. Aukward children when they meet on the ſtreet, or in the field, they, perhaps, for a little look angrily at one another—then one of them reaches his neighbour a blow—which is ſoon returned—each of the two is joined by his friends—the clamour riſes on the green—hats fly off—the hair is pulled—faces are ſcratched—heads perhaps are broken, and coats and ſhirts are torn—in a while they grow weary of giving

and receiving blows, and, leaving off the fray, they agree to live in peace. Kings and miniſters of ſtate are juſt big grown up children; they are like the children I ſpeak of, with this particular and unhappy difference, that inſtead of fighting out the needleſs quarrels they have raiſed, betaking themſelves to places of ſhelter, they hound out their innocent ſubjects to battle; and involve the nation they miſ-govern, in bloodſhed and expence; and perhaps, by levies, and by heavy taxes, firſt weaken it, and then gradually reduce it to abſolute poverty, to utter ruin and contempt. The next thing I propoſed was,

V. To mention ſome of thoſe rules which have been agreed upon to mitigate ſome of the ills of war. *From whence come wars and fightings among you?* Among you, Chriſtians. If you cannot prevent war altogether, is it not in your power to ſoften its rigour and ferocity, at leaſt in ſome degree.

Whenſoever a war, even a lawful war, hath commenced, there are many unjuſt and cruel things done; done from immemorial practice, ſome of which, perhaps, cannot be avoided:— In war, it is uſual to conſider the prince and his ſubjects as making only one perſon, and of courſe to conclude that whatever injury the prince hath done, the ſubjects may be juſtly puniſhed for it; and from this fiction, the injured fall upon the ſubjects of the injurious prince by ſea and land, and either kill them, or ſtrip them of all they have: this is, at preſent, and hath long been, for aught I know, the univerſal practice; and

yet it appears to be unjuſt. Have we not been ſtruck with a ſenſe of this injuſtice, on ſeeing French merchants carried priſoners along our ſtreets, who, having acquired a fortune in the Indies, and knowing nothing of any hoſtility between France and England, were returning peaceably home, and were, on the open ſeas, fallen upon by our privateers, and robbed of every farthing they had got? And, I believe, the humane, among the French, are ſtruck in the ſame manner when they ſee, carried into their priſons, any Britiſh merchants, who had been captured and robbed by the privateers of France.—It is juſt that the injurer, and not the innocent ſhould ſuffer. Would it not be right, and agreeable to what nature dictates, that kings, or their miniſters, ſhould fight it out, and, in their own perſons, finiſh the war which they have provoked? Should they not feel and ſpeak the noble ſentiments and language of king David, when, for a particular offence of his, a great plague was to come upon his innocent ſubjects: Here, I think, David expreſſes a ſtrong and a proper ſenſe of juſtice; here, the generoſity of his ſoul appears as illuſtrious as it doth in any other prayer, or pſalm, or ſpeech, or in any action of his life. David ſaid unto God, 'Is it not I, 'even I it is that have ſinned, and done evil 'indeed; but as for theſe ſheep, what have they 'done? Let thine hand, I pray thee, O Lord my 'God, be on me, and on my father's houſe; 'but not on thy people, that they ſhould be

'plagued.'* So delicate a ſenſe of juſtice is ſurely rare.

But I am to ſpeak of the rules, the reſtrictions, which, in all ages, have been agreed upon to moderate the fury of parties at war, and which Chriſtians ought ſurely to obſerve: for even that nation, which, by its injuſtice, hath excited againſt itſelf a juſt war, doth ſtill retain rights which it would be high injuſtice to violate.

In war, the aim of the injured nation ought to be no more but to compel the injurious to agree to reaſonable terms of peace; that is, to make due reparation, and give aſſurance that it will not, as before, violate the laws of juſtice. This is the lawful aim in war, and it ought to be proſecuted with as little bloodſhed, as little deſtruction, as poſſible. Nothing ſhould be done that tends merely to exaſperate, to make the breach wider, and to lengthen out the conteſt; nothing ſhould be done but that which hath ſome tendency to bring the war to an end. Incurſions into the interior parts of the enemies country, burning villages, driving cattle, when not abſolutely neceſſary to ſubſiſt the army, robbing and killing the unarmed and defenceleſs peaſants, in their ſeparate dwellings and plantations—is unjuſt and cruel; it is an irritating, a paultry, and pilfering way of making war.

The fortune of the war may alter, and a cutting remembrance of ſuch needleſs and unavailing acts of barbarity may provoke a dreadful re-

* 1 Chron. xxi. 17.

taliation and revenge. 'Gideon ſaid to Zeba 'and Zalmunna, the two princes of Midian, 'What manner of men were they whom ye ſlew 'at Tabor? and they anſwered, As thou art, ſo 'were they, each one reſembled the children of 'a king. And he ſaid, They were my brethren; 'as the Lord liveth, if ye had ſaved them alive, 'I would not ſlay you—And Gideon aroſe and 'ſlew them.'†

To make war in the way I have mentioned is condemned by the law of nations. And all nations have, I think, agreed that the perſon of an ambaſſador is not to be violated,—nor hoſtages ſlain, unleſs it be for ſome crime of their own, after they had become hoſtages—nor ſoldiers fired upon, after they have thrown down their arms, and begged for quarter—nor the wounded ſlaughtered upon the field—nor priſoners killed or barbarouſly uſed—nor the ſword drawn againſt old men or children—nor women raviſhed or killed—theſe, and other rules and reſtrictions, have been agreed to by all civilized nations, and they tend to mitigate the horror of war to a very conſiderable degree.—It hath been maintained, that, from the genius and gentle ſpirit of Chriſtianity, war is now made with more mildneſs than it was in antient times. Perhaps in moſt Chriſtian countries it is generally ſo, and I am ſorry that this mildneſs of modern manners in war is not univerſal.—I think of Mexico and Peru, where, by profeſſed Chriſtians, many millions of harmleſs people were ſavagely butchered

† Judges viii. 18, 19.

above two hundred years ago; many leſſer inſtances of the ſame kind might be mentioned; but I would fain think, that the mournful narrative, that, within theſe few years, four or five millions of innocent people in Indoſtan were ſtarved and deſtroyed by the rigour and rapacity of the Engliſh, is not ſufficiently authenticated. It muſt however be confeſſed, that the manner in which war is carried on now is very different from that of the antients; the antients, inſtead of killing thoſe they conquered, did often carry the conquered along with them into their own country. When David was abſent from Ziklag, the Amalekites invaded the country, invaded Ziklag, and ſmote it, and burnt it with fire, and took the women captives that were therein: 'They ſlew not any, either great or ſmall, but 'carried them away, and went on their way'.† When the Iſraelites conſpired againſt the king of Aſſyria, and refuſed to pay him tribute, 'the 'king of Aſſyria,' after a ſiege of three years, 'took Samaria, and carried Iſrael away into 'Aſſyria, and placed them in Halah, and in Ha'bor, by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of 'the Medes.‡ And when Nebuchadnezzar conquered Judah, he carried the inhabitants captive to Babylon, having, ſo far as I remember, ſlain but a few.

In one word, it is naturally juſt to make war by open violence, as far as it is neceſſary to obtain our right, or to diſtreſs the enemy, ſo as he ſhall conſent to juſt terms: but ſuch violence

† 1 Sam. xxx. 1, 2. ‡ 2 Kings xvii. 3, 6.

and cruelty as is not naturally ſubſervient to this purpoſe, or without which we could obtain our right as effectually, and at no greater expence to ourſelves, is unjuſt, and deteſtable in the ſight of God and man. In order to end ſo horrible a thing as war, I think I may ſay further, that if, in the courſe of the war, the leaders of the one contending party find that their armies are weaker, and their reſources fewer, than thoſe of the other, they ought to controul their pride, and ſubmit, with as good a grace as poſſible, to the ſtronger: this is ſurely a leſs evil than that they ſhould, by their obſtinacy, bring extermination upon their country. Civil liberty is precious, but life is ſtill more ſo. Why will ye die, ſays the prophet Jeremiah to the king of Judah—'Why will ye die, thou and thy people, by the 'ſword, by the famine, and by the peſtilence, 'as the Lord hath ſpoken againſt the nation that 'will not ſerve the king of Babylon?'* And whatever ſome of the haughty Romans have boaſted to the contrary, I think it manifeſt that Cato and Scipio ought to have ſubmitted to Ceſar, rather than (as they did) put a violent end to their lives: for that unnatural and unjuſtifiable ſtep they are cenſured by the more judicious of even the Heathen writers. It is every man's duty to preſerve his life, though, by the viciſſitudes of the world, he may ſee himſelf obliged to become the ſubject or the ſervant of a new maſter. Self-preſervation is his indiſpenſible duty; he owes it to God, to his country,

* Jeremiah xxvii. 13.

and to himſelf: and God may, in his good time, reſtore him to liberty.

And here I cannot but regret, that, in this unhappy conteſt between Great Britain and its Colonies, ſome perſons have been invidiouſly miſrepreſented as entertaining opinions too favourable to the cauſe of the Americans. In a conteſt of this ſort, it is impoſſible but that the opinions of thinking people muſt be different; and mere opinion, eſpecially of thoſe in the lower walks in life, can have no effect at all upon the iſſue of the diſpute: but I honeſtly declare that though, as I think, theſe Coloniſts were treated with too much harſhneſs formerly, it is my opinion they would now act the wiſe part, would they frankly ſubmit to the terms that have been offered them by the Parliament of Britain: this would be wiſer than to continue the war, and thereby bring ruin on their country; this would be a ſafer and wiſer meaſure than that, being ſeduced by the fallacious promiſe of aſſiſtance, they ſhould fling themſelves into the arms of France; that connexion is unnatural: They would be much more happy connected, as formerly, with the generous Engliſh, with thoſe who are of the ſame language, the ſame religion, the ſame blood with themſelves, though they ſhould not yet obtain independence. Ah! is there not ſome patriot, or ſome illuſtrious band of patriots, who ſhall try, and try with ſucceſs, to renew this kindred connexion? who ſhall wiſely, and for the relief and happineſs of the two contending parties, bring about this ſo much deſired re-

concilement and peace? O peace! thou firſt of human bleſſings, how deſirable art thou? Peace! peace at home, and peace with our kinſmen and brethren at a great diſtance! Bleſſed be the man that brings us thee, who ſhall put a ſtop to levies, to depopulation abroad and at home; who ſhall command the bloody ſword to be put into the ſcabbard, and the noiſy machines of war to be ſtill; who ſhall bid the Americans diſband their armies, bid them ſubdue and cultivate their unimproved, but naturally fertile and widely extended territories; teach them to apply with induſtry to every ſort of manufactures, and to purſue commerce at large with the Aſiatic and European nations; who ſhall teach them the arts of peace, to promote population, and by eſtabliſhing equal laws, and a generous ſyſtem of liberty, to render their country an aſylum to the many thouſands who are, alas! at this day, borne down and impolitically oppreſſed in Europe. And who ſhall, at the ſame time, call home the Britiſh armies and fleets to protect this fair, this exhauſted, and ill-defended iſland againſt the unprovoked attempts of France, and even to ſtrike, in ſelf-defence, a merited blow againſt that menacing and faithleſs power. Who doth not pray that Heaven may, as formerly, raiſe up ſuch a patriot? Who doth not wiſh to ſee ſo happy a turn of our affairs?

VI. I proceed to the laſt thing, namely, to mention, and moſtly from the text, ſome reaſons why a people, even though they have ſome religion, or at leaſt appear to be ſerious, may con-

tinue long involved in diſtreſs, and even in the calamities of war itſelf. *Ye luſt, and have not: ye kill, and deſire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, becauſe ye aſk not. Ye aſk, and receive not, becauſe ye aſk amiſs, that ye may conſume it upon your luſts.*

It appears, from many inſtances in ſcripture, that individuals, who ſeek God, may, for a long time, be held in worldly diſtreſs, whilſt they wait that God will reſcue them. This, you know, was the caſe with Job, and with the Pſalmiſt alſo. The prayer, the expoſtulation of the righteous at ſuch a time is, 'Save me, O God, 'for the waters are come in unto my ſoul. I ſink 'in deep mire, where there is no ſtanding: I am 'come into deep waters, where the floods over-'flow me. I am weary of my crying, my 'throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for 'my God.* Will the Lord caſt off for ever? 'and will he be favourable no more? Is his 'mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promiſe 'fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be 'gracious?'† The church and people of God may be long in diſtreſs alſo. Thus the Iſraelites were for a long time borne down and oppreſſed in Egypt. 'They ſighed by reaſon of the bon-'dage, and they cried; and their cry came up 'unto God, by reaſon of the bondage.'‡ So alſo the ſame people, in their long captivity, 'By 'the rivers of Babylon, ſay they, there we ſat 'down, yea, we wept when we remembered 'Zion. We hanged our harps upon the wil-

* Pſal. lxix. 1, 2, 3. † Pſal. lxxvii. 7, 8, 9. ‡ Exod. ii. 23.

'lows, in the midſt thereof.'§—Why a ſober and ſeemingly virtuous individual is ſometimes long in pain or in adverſity, or why in war, for inſtance, thoſe who contend for the intereſt of liberty, of virtue, of the public good, of the human ſpecies, are often unſucceſsful, is among theſe ſecret things which belong unto God. Why Ceſar was victorious at Pharſalia; why Octavius and Antony prevailed againſt Caſſius and the amiable Brutus, on the plains of Philippi; why God, in his providence, hath ſuffered the Mahometans to enthral ſo fair and ſo great a part of the antient world; why the Popiſh powers have ſo long and ſo much ſucceeded in trampling down the Proteſtants, and checking the progreſs of the Reformation—theſe, and many things of the like kind, are the myſterious ways of Heaven—'the ways of that God, who 'giveth not account of any of his matters.'—In private life 'the tabernacles of robbers proſper;' and in public, thoſe ſocieties or nations which to us ſeem to be the moſt ſober, and innocent, and deſerving, are diſappointed of ſucceſs, and are made to groan under a heavy burden of diſtreſs.

But, my brethren, we are, perhaps, very often and very widely miſtaken in the eſtimate we make of the comparative merit of individuals or of ſocieties. Moſt certainly the ways of God are right, and religion, if it reſtrain its votaries from daring crimes which might elevate them at once to worldly greatneſs, is the way to paſs through the world with ſecurity and eaſe; and

§ Pſalms cxxxix. 1, 2.

yet it muſt be confeſſed that the church and people of God may ſometimes be long in adverſity: of this diſpenſation of Providence we are able to perceive many of the wiſe reaſons, though we be too blind to ſee them all.

In general, God leaves his people long in trouble to alarm their conſciences, to check them in their wild career, and force them to think of the eternal world: a conſtant courſe of proſperity is extremely dangerous; men enchanted with the pleaſures of the preſent world, ſeldom think of God, or of the world to come. Whilſt they ſuffer affliction, they think on the cauſes of their ſuffering, and from the fear of greater ſufferings in the life to come, they are, by the grace of God, led to repentance. It is therefore from his wiſdom, and his loving kindneſs, that God afflicts men. And if a nation or ſociety hath become corrupted and luxurious, it hath great need of being viſited with the temporal judgments of God. The people may be awakened, and may repent ſincerely; and for a while ſome ſtop may be put to the operation of theſe cauſes which produce national ruin.—But I ſhould rather ſpeak in particular, of being kept long in theſe calamities which accompany a ſtate of war.

And, firſt, it may be ſaid that God keeps a people long in theſe calamities, to raiſe and keep alive in them a habitual diſlike of war, and a ſtrong averſion to begin any particular war, though, at firſt view, and when it is ſlightly conſidered, it may appear to be juſt. War is ſo

horrible in its aſpect, and ſo deſolating in its progreſs, that it is not to be gone into from a ſudden fit of paſſion, but after long, and calm, and ſerious deliberation—after every method to procure, to *buy peace*, hath been tried—and tried in vain: and it ſhould not be begun on account of any tranſient or frivolous act of injuſtice: nor ſhould it be begun at all, unleſs the prince who begins it is rich, and ſtrong, and powerful, and is in a manner certain of ſucceſs: indeed Providence oftentimes confounds the proud and mighty, raiſes the ſpirits and encreaſes the ſtrength of the weak; and *the battle is not always to the ſtrong*. Even this conſideration will render a cautious prince, or a wiſe miniſter, ſlow to enter into war. One would think that princes, rather than drench the nations in blood, ſhould meet and finiſh their ſenſeleſs differences by friendly conference—or compromiſe them by arbitration—or by caſting lots—or even, as I hinted before, finiſh them by ſingle combat; which laſt, however wrong it is in private quarrels, is ſurely a far leſs evil than to thin the human ſpecies by a deſolating war, which the rulers have, from arrogance and a ſpirit of domination, haſtened to commence.—Indeed, if the ſubjects have fooliſhly approved of the raſh ſteps of their rulers, and have even loudly encouraged them by fomenting their arrogance, and publicly calling upon them to enter into and to continue in *coercive*, violent, and ſanguinary meaſures, offering to ſpend their *lives and fortunes* in the war, it ſeems but juſt in Providence that they ſhould be made to ſuffer

for a long time the calamities of the war.—Alas! it is commonly the grandees of a country, who, for ſelfiſh ends, do thus ſlaviſhly beat time with the raſh meaſures of their rulers, and the bulk of the people are made to ſuffer.—A war may be in ſome ſort juſt, and yet it may be very imprudent and inexpedient to enter into it.

2. A people who have religion, who faſt and pray for ſucceſs, may continue long to bear the calamities of war, becauſe they employ unjuſt meaſures in the proſecution of it. A perſon who is aſſaulted by another on the ſtreet, hath a juſt claim againſt that other in a court of law; but if he hath furiouſly turned upon the man who aſſaulted him, and beaten him with ten times more ſeverity than he was beaten himſelf, his claim for redreſs becomes weaker, at leaſt, than it would otherwiſe have been.—To obtain ſucceſs, to be delivered from the calamities of war, it becomes a people to examine whether the meaſures they purſue in conducting the war be agreeable to the will of God or not. *Ye luſt, and have not: ye kill, and deſire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not.*

It is ſtrange that any people ſhould expect or dare to pray for ſucceſs, whilſt the end they aim at is wrong, and the conduct they purſue obviouſly criminal. Can a thief, can a robber, who is eager to enrich himſelf by the ſpoils of the induſtrious, can he expect that, while he perpetrates his crimes, God will hide him behind a thick cloud, ſo that he ſhall not be detected?

Can the murderer pray in earneſt that God may aſſiſt him to perpetrate an aſſaſſination? Or, in this debauched age, can the adulterer or the adultereſs look up to God and pray, and expect to ſucceed in their vile aſſignations and amorous intrigues?

Whilſt we faſt and pray for ſucceſs in this tedious and lamentable war, let us, let our rulers and commanders, examine whether there be not ſome unjuſtifiable ſteps which we have taken already? Hath no unneceſſary theft, or pillage, or plunder, or robbery, been committed? Hath no act of ſhocking and barbarous cruelty been done? Hath no army, or part of an army, been killed after they had ſurrendered, had thrown down their arms? Have none of the wounded been ſlaughtered on the field of battle; or have none of them been left to periſh in their wounds, without being carried to hoſpitals, or any-wiſe taken care of? Hath no furious officer, hardened by bloodſhed, been hounded out, at the head of a group of ſavages, to burn the houſes, and ruin the crops of the quiet and innocent planters? Or hath ſuch an officer been applauded and rewarded for having begun a horrid *war of diſtreſs?* Have no villages, no towns, no cities, been wantonly burned, when they might have been preſerved? If none of theſe things have been done, we have, no doubt, the better reaſon to hope for more ſucceſs than we have yet met with: but if any of ſuch enormouſly criminal meaſures have been purſued, need we wonder that though we faſt, the war is prolonged, and

that God hath not yet given us the ſucceſs which we pray for. *Ye kill, and deſire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not.* I next obſerve from the text,

3. That a people may be long held in diſtreſs, though they faſt and aſk for relief, becauſe they aſk amiſs. *Ye aſk, and receive not, becauſe ye aſk amiſs, that ye may conſume it upon your luſts.* This is the character which the Spirit of God gives of thoſe to whom this letter is addreſſed; and I wiſh it may not alſo be the character of many who are called by lawful authority to humble themſelves as on this faſt day.

We have faſted ſeveral times before.—We have prayed for ſucceſs, and that this inglorious war might ſoon come to an end: but hitherto things continue juſt as they were: it is well if our condition be not worſe than when we commenced the war: 'We looked for judgment, 'but behold oppreſſion; for righteouſneſs, but 'behold a cry.' Still 'we look for righteouſneſs, 'but there is none; for ſalvation, but it is far 'off.' One year of this tireſome war, a ſecond, a third, a fourth, hath gone over our heads, and another year of it is begun. 'The harveſt is 'paſt, the ſummer is ended, and we are not 'ſaved.' May not this be a preſumption that Heaven is diſpleaſed with our aim, and by repeatedly counter-working our efforts, intimates to us that abundance of blood is ſhed already.—I ſincerely wiſh, that the fomenters of this war, on both ſides of the Atlantic, may be of this mind. I remember that when Otho, in his con-

teſt againſt Vitellius for the Roman empire, had loſt a battle, but had ſtill great reſources, and, in the opinion of his friends, great cauſe to hope for ſucceſs, he chooſed at once to take the deſperate ſtep of a Roman death, rather than to be the occaſion of any more bloodſhed of the Romans his fellow-citizens! Or at leaſt is not the great length of this war, which at firſt was expected to be eaſily finiſhed in one ſhort campaign, a preſumption that, in their profeſſions to faſt and to repent, the inhabitants of the land have not been ſincere. 'Will ye ſteal, and murder, and commit adultery, and ſwear falſely by 'the name of God;' and even by your laws, give encouragement to a falſe, a blaſphemous, and idolatrous religion,—'Will ye plead for Baal?*—'Will ye burn incenſe to Baal?'†—and yet come to this place—and, hanging down the head like a bulruſh, pray for ſucceſs in this woeful war, in which the nation hath been ſo long engaged, and by which it is ſo miſerably exhauſted? Firſt repent of your ſins, and then you will be better prepared to *aſk*, and may the rather hope *to obtain.*

It is poſſible there may be in high life ſome perſons who are ſtrangely corrupted; but I hope there is not one of you who wiſhes for ſucceſs that you may lay hold on the revenue and the ſpoil of a foreign land, to be conſumed upon your luſts: and if in this land there be really ſome perſons ſo far debaſed as to wiſh for ſucceſs in the war, that ſo they may get more gold

* Judges vi. 31. † Jeremiah vii. 9.

and ſilver to conſume in luxury, high living, drunkenneſs and gluttony, or in gaming, lewdneſs, and expenſive debauchery, grown up to a ſcandalous height, unheard of till this preſent age.—If there be others who covet greater riches, that they may with a heavier hand bear down and oppreſs their dependents abroad and at home.—If there be a ſtill higher, a miniſterial party, who, by a revenue ſqueezed from America, mean to create new offices, new poſts, new penſions, greater bribes, in order (and by the means of Popery too) to eſtabliſh and aſcertain a ſyſtem of deſpotic power which ſhall be firm and laſting, like that in France, in Spain, and in other Popiſh kingdoms.—If all, or if any of theſe dangerous points be in view—we need not wonder that a wiſe and gracious God hath not yet granted a ſucceſs which would be grievous to the people abroad, and, in its iſſue, lamentably hurtful to moſt of thoſe at home. Whenever the Plebeians in antient Rome raiſed a loud cry againſt the oppreſſion and heavy burdens which they were compelled to bear, the Patricians, in order to ſilence theſe cries, trumped up a ſtory about ſome injury that had been done to the ſtate, and the neceſſity of a foreign war, to which war they hounded out the poor abaſed people.—And in all ages it hath been uſual for rulers to purſue wars and conqueſts abroad, that they might the more effectually enſlave their ſubjects at home. And without all queſtion riches from abroad, or greater riches

in whatever way they come, enable the prince to oppreſs and enſlave his ſubjects.

I juſt add, that we of this nation are perhaps hitherto held in the miſeries of war, becauſe, though we faſt, we look not up to God for deliverance: we conſider not that war is, in a ſpecial manner, an appeal to Heaven. By a ſudden pannic, by a ſtorm at land, or by a turn of the wind at ſea, God can make the war iſſue as he pleaſes: we preſume on our own ſtrength—we proudly expect to force ſucceſs by the arm of fleſh—we have been long diſappointed—but we complain of our Generals and our Admirals, and attend not to *the ſigns of the times*,—to the operation and courſe of the providence of God.—Our hearts are not right with God: we faſt and we pray: *we aſk, but do not obtain, becauſe we aſk amiſs:* not conſidering that victory, even in the juſteſt war, is not to be prayed for, but with ſubmiſſion to the will of God; leaving it entirely to his infinite wiſdom whether he will grant our petitions or not.

And after all, who knows that though henceforth our plans ſhould be wiſely laid, though our Generals ſhould diſplay ever ſo good conduct, and our ſoldiers exert ever ſo much courage, yet we may at length find it to be the determination of God that we muſt part with that ſuperiority, which we have exerciſed ſo long over the extenſive, the far diſtant Weſtern World, now become populous: if this matter, like the revolt of the ten tribes,* is from God, 'the coun-

* 1 Kings xii. 24.

'ſel of the Lord ſhall ſtand, and who are we that
'we ſhould fight againſt him. The Moſt High
'divideth to the nations their inheritance: God
'changeth the times and the ſeaſons.'

I muſt mention another ſort of war, which I forgot to take notice of at the beginning of this diſcourſe, I mean, wrangling about abſtruſe points, and metaphyſical opinions: to that ſort of wars and fightings it is likely St. James had a view in the text; for the epiſtle is directed to the twelve tribes that were ſcattered abroad; and many of the Jews, even after they were converted to Chriſtianity, were, it ſeems, eager enough to enter into metaphyſical diſputes: indeed, for many centuries backward, ſuch diſputes had agitated the minds of ſpeculative men, and ſome of the tenets, formerly diſputed about, did very early become ſubjects of contention among Chriſtians. By one party, a point was keenly affirmed, and by another party it was keenly denied: the debate continued, and the contention grew warm; and this hath been the caſe in almoſt every age downward to the preſent time; for when the ſaw of contention is often drawn backwards and forwards, it is apt to grow hot in the hands of thoſe who draw it: hence ſo many proceſſes againſt tenets and doctrines, ſome of them perhaps very innocent, others of them perfectly unintelligible: hence ſo many controverſies in ſchool-divinity, ſo much rage, ſo much fury, which hath often led to perſecution, to war, and to bloodſhed: this is the war of narrow-minded theologians; it riſes a-

mong them, it is conducted and foughten by them: and this, like other wars, ſprings from the luſts of men: it comes not from the calm love of truth; nor can it be ſaid that they are the moſt enlightened in the knowledge of the truth, who commence proſecutions about doctrines or opinions. It is commonly the dull who are the ring-leaders, and the dull alſo who are the followers in this ſort of war: in theſe the luſt of pride is often very prevalent: they have formed a ſet of ſpeculative opinions, and they cannot bear that others ſhould differ from them; for this were to call their underſtanding in queſtion. — Or, this war ſprings from the luſt of covetouſneſs and ambition. — Some perſon is like to be preferred to a lucrative and honourable place—his character muſt be blown—a report muſt be circulated that he is deeply tinctured with heterodox principles—a proceſs of hereſy muſt be raiſed againſt him, that ſo he may be rejected, and that his accuſer, or ſome one of his accuſer's friends, may ſtep into the place.—But to inveſtigate the origin, to mark the progreſs, to ſhew the folly, the wickedneſs, and the dreadful effects of this theological war, would require a long diſcourſe. I conclude this faſt-ſermon with repeating the text, and ſome of the ſpiritual exhortations which the Apoſtle ſubjoins to it.

'From whence come wars and fightings a-
'mong you? come they not hence, even of your
'luſts, that war in your members? Ye luſt, and
'have not: ye kill, and deſire to have, and can-
'not obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not,

'becauſe ye aſk not. Ye aſk, and receive not,
'becauſe ye aſk amiſs, that ye may conſume it
'upon your luſts. Ye adulterers, and adulte-
'reſſes, know ye not that the friendſhip of the
'world is enmity with God? whoſoever there-
'fore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy
'of God.—God reſiſteth the proud, but giveth
'grace unto the humble. Submit yourſelves
'therefore to God.—Draw nigh to God, and
'he will draw nigh to you: cleanſe your hands,
'ye ſinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-
'minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep:
'let your laughter be turned to mourning, and
'your joy to heavineſs. Humble yourſelves in
'the ſight of the Lord, and he ſhall lift you up.'

THE END.